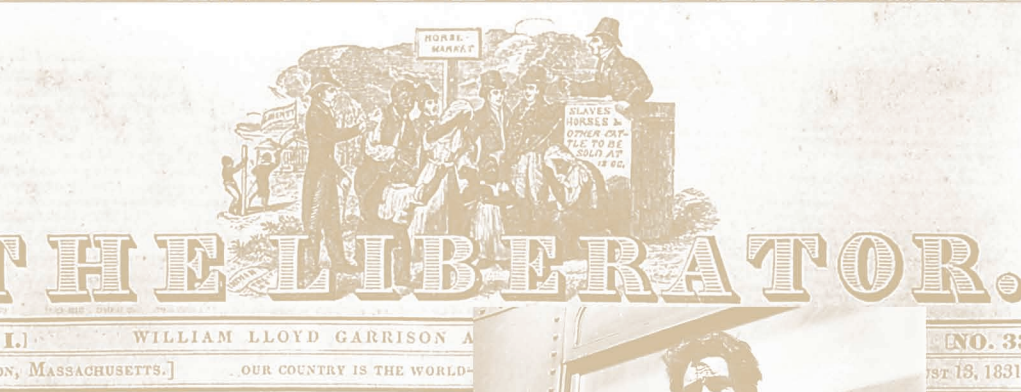




# UNITED STATES HISTORY

1880-1910

## Gold on the Sidewalk: An Immigrant Story



**PLEASE SEE  
NOTES ON THE  
PDF, PAGE 7.**



# LESSONS IN U.S. HISTORY

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## THE UCI HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE PROJECT

The California History-Social Science Project (CH-SSP) of the University of California, Irvine, is dedicated to working with history teachers in Orange County to develop innovative approaches to engaging students in the study of the past. Founded in 2000, the CH-SSP draws on the resources of the UCI Department of History and works closely with the UCI Department of Education. We believe that the history classroom can be a crucial arena not only for instruction in history but also for the improvement of student literacy and writing skills. Working together with the teachers of Orange County, it is our goal to develop history curricula that will convince students that history matters.

## HUMANITIES OUT THERE

Humanities Out There was founded in 1997 as an educational partnership between the School of Humanities at the University of California, Irvine and the Santa Ana Unified School District. HOT runs workshops in humanities classrooms in Santa Ana schools. Advanced graduate students in history and literature design curricular units in collaboration with host teachers, and conduct workshops that engage UCI undergraduates in classroom work. In the area of history, HOT works closely with the UCI History-Social Science Project in order to improve student literacy and writing skills in the history classroom, and to integrate the teaching of history, literature, and writing across the humanities. The K-12 classroom becomes a laboratory for developing innovative units that adapt university materials to the real needs and interests of California schools. By involving scholars, teachers, students, and staff from several institutions in collaborative teaching and research, we aim to transform educational practices, expectations, and horizons for all participants.

## THE SANTA ANA PARTNERSHIP

The Santa Ana Partnership was formed in 1983 as part of the Student and Teacher Educational Partnership (STEP) initiative at UC Irvine. Today it has evolved into a multi-faceted collaborative that brings institutions and organizations together in the greater Santa Ana area to advance the educational achievement of all students, and to help them enter and complete college. Co-directed at UC Irvine by the Center for Educational Partnerships, the collaborative is also strongly supported by Santa Ana College, the Santa Ana Unified School District, California State University, Fullerton and a number of community-based organizations. Since 2003-2004, HOT has contributed to the academic mission of the Santa Ana Partnership by placing its workshops in GEAR UP schools. This unit, *Gold on the Sidewalk: An Immigrant Story*, reflects the innovative collaboration among these institutions and programs.

## CONTENT COUNTS: A SPECIAL PROJECT OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

This is one in a series of publications under the series title Content Counts: Reading and Writing Across the Humanities, supported by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Content Counts units are designed by and for educators committed to promoting a deep, content-rich and knowledge-driven literacy in language arts and social studies classrooms. The units provide examples of “content reading”—primary and secondary sources, as well as charts, data, and visual documents—designed to supplement and integrate the study of history and literature.



A publication of Humanities Out There and the Santa Ana Partnership  
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# Gold on the Sidewalk: An Immigrant Story

## LESSON INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS

### Teacher's Guide

This lesson uses an autobiographical fragment by the Jewish immigrant Pauline Newman to address California Content Standard 11.2 (the rise of industrialization, rural-to-urban migration, and immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe). In the lesson, students consider forces that “pushed” immigrants out of their home regions and those that “pulled” them towards the United States. They

also examine the hardships experienced by many immigrants on their journeys to America. Specifically, the students compare Pauline’s account of her life in a Lithuanian village with descriptions and images of life on the Lower East Side of New York City. These exercises highlight the ways that America truly was a “New World” for pre-industrial villagers who were transplanted into urban metropolises like New

York. Later in the lesson, students read about the debate over whether or not immigrants like Pauline should have been able to come to the United States. This section of the lesson also asks the students to think about the differences between primary and secondary sources. At the end of the lesson, the students do a creative assignment in which they design a story-board for a film about Pauline’s life.

### Historical Background

A century ago, the United States was in the midst of the largest immigrant influx in its history (that is, immigrants made up a larger percentage of the U.S. population than they have at other times). Prior to the nineteenth century, most immigrants to the U.S. came from Western and Northern Europe: Germany, Ireland, Great Britain, and the Scandinavian countries. This is often referred to as the “old immigration.” Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, however, this pattern shifted, and by 1900, the majority of “new” immigrants came from Eastern, Central, and Southern Europe. Between 1880 and 1930, over twenty-seven million people immigrated to the United States, twenty million of these coming through Ellis Island in New

York City. The sheer number of newcomers was unprecedented, and many “native” Americans feared that the “wretched refuse” streaming into their nation posed a dire threat to the social fabric of the United States. Of course, nativist discomfort with and hostility to immigrants was nothing new in America: Benjamin Franklin had complained as early as 1751 that “swarthy” German immigrants to Pennsylvania were threatening to “Germanize” the colony; and the American, or “Know Nothing,” Party experienced a moment of meteoric success in the 1850s based primarily on its virulent opposition to Irish Catholic immigration.

This “new immigration” was particularly disturbing to nativist Americans who didn’t like the types of people who were immi-

grating. Most of the immigrants arriving around 1900 were Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Jewish, and many Americans considered their religions, as well as their languages, folkways, and social mores, to be threateningly inassimilable and distinctly “un-American.” In addition, these immigrants often lacked the capital to acquire land in the West and were drawn, through a process of “chain migration,” (like Pauline Newman) to extended kin and ethnic networks. Therefore, the majority of “new” immigrants clustered in America’s booming cities, typically working for low wages in a variety of manufacturing enterprises like the garment industry. These urban centers were overcrowded; New York’s

*Historical Background  
continues on page 3*

## **CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS COVERED IN THIS LESSON**

### **Content Standards: Grade Eleven**

- **11.2 Students analyze the relationship among the rise of industrialization, large-scale rural-to-urban migration, and massive immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.**
  - **11.2.2** Analyze the relationship among the rise of industrialization, large-scale rural-to-urban migration, and massive immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.

### **Skills: Grades Nine through Twelve**

#### **■ Chronological and Spatial Thinking Skills**

- Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.
- Students use a variety of maps and documents to interpret human movement, including major patterns of domestic and international migration, changing environmental preferences and settlement patterns, the frictions that develop between population groups, and the diffusion of ideas, technological innovations, and goods.
- Students relate current events to the physical and human characteristics of places and regions.

#### **■ Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View Skills**

- Students identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations.
- Students construct and test hypotheses; collect, evaluate, and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in oral and written presentations.

#### **■ Historical Interpretation Skills**

- Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.
- Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect.
- Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.
- Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.

## Historical Background *continued from page 1*

Lower East Side, for example, was the most densely populated area on the face of the planet one hundred years ago. Big cities like New York were pathologized as cesspools of human misery by those who idealized a rapidly-vanishing rural America of independent, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant small-producers.

Despite the hostility and difficult conditions they often encountered in America, immigrants continued to stream into the country (though significant numbers also returned to their home countries or emigrated to other destinations after sojourns in America). They were drawn

by the promise of relatively high wage jobs generated by the nation's industrialization, as well as by the perception that the United States offered an opportunity for upward social mobility. While some immigrants were pulled to the United States by jobs and opportunity, others were pushed out of their home countries by social upheaval and economic instability. Nearly 1.5 million Eastern European Jews, for example, fled for the United States between 1880 and 1910 because of pogroms and prejudice.

The subject of this lesson, a young Jewish woman named Pauline Newman, immigrated

to the United States from Russian-occupied Lithuania around the turn of the twentieth century (technically, Lithuania did not exist as an independent nation at this time). Pauline's story echoes that of millions of other immigrants who came seeking a better life in America. After her arrival, Pauline got a job at the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, though she left this company before the terrible fire in 1911 that killed 146 workers (mostly young immigrant women like herself). Pauline later went on to become an organizer with the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

### KEY TERMS (*highlighted in gray throughout the text*)

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## Gold on the Sidewalk: An Immigrant Story

**Emigrant:** a person who leaves one country to settle in another (“out-flow”). This word is similar to immigrant, but it emphasizes the act of leaving the country in which one is living.

**Immigrant:** a person who leaves one country to settle in another (“in-flow”). This word is similar to emigrant, but it emphasizes the act of arriving in the new country.

**Primary Source:** an actual record of events that has survived from the past. Examples of primary sources include letters, photographs, diaries, oral histories, newspaper accounts, and posters.

**Secondary Source:** an account of the past created by someone who did not witness the event firsthand. Secondary sources synthesize and analyze primary-source materials. Examples include textbooks, encyclopedias, and articles that interpret other research works.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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# Gold on the Sidewalk: An Immigrant Story

### Books

- Abramowicz, Hirsz. *Profiles of a Lost World: Memoirs of East European Jewish Life Before World War II*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999. This is a rare, eyewitness account of Jewish life in Eastern Europe during the first half of the twentieth century. Hirsz documents the local history of the Lithuanian Jewish community in rural and small-town settings and in the city of Vilna, a major center of Eastern European Jewish intellectual and cultural life.
- Dinnerstein, Leonard and David Reimers. *Ethnic Americans: A History of Immigration and Assimilation*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999. This book emphasizes the successive waves of new arrivals on American shores from the 1840s onward. It examines the circumstances of their departure from their original homelands and describes their reception in America. The authors not only analyze the difficult problems immigrants themselves had adjusting to an alien environment, but also follow the stories of second and third generations as they adjusted to life in the United States. The book argues that immigrants generally clung to their Old World cultures and shunned American ways; for most groups, it wasn't until second and subsequent generations that these immigrant groups gradually gave up traditional customs and began the process of assimilation.
- Morrison, Joan and Charlotte Fox Zabusky, eds. *American Mosaic: The Immigrant Experience in the Words of Those Who Lived It*. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1993. This book collects firsthand accounts by immigrants who entered the United States in the early-twentieth century. The immigrants describe in detail the life they left behind them in Europe, explaining why they emigrated, what they endured, and what became of them after their arrival. Pauline Newman's story is collected here.
- Nugent, Walter. *Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations, 1870-1914*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992. Nugent analyzes immigration to the U.S. between 1870 and 1914 within a larger, transatlantic context, placing this immigration history within the context of a dozen or so other destinations in the Atlantic region.

### Film

*Hester Street* (1975). Directed by Joan Micklin Silver. Based on a story by Abraham Cahan, this film portrays Jewish culture on the Lower East Side of Manhattan during the late-nineteenth century.

### Electronic Resources

American Social History Project: Heaven Will Protect the Working Girl

<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/ashp/heaven/index.html>

This website features a guide to accompany the documentary, *Heaven Will Protect the Working Girl: Immigrant Women in the Turn-of-the-Century City*. Even if you don't purchase the documentary, the site is a very useful resource for both students and teachers. The "Viewer's Guide" link features primary-source documents and historical background on immigrant life in New York City. The "Primary Documents" link includes period articles about the Shirtwaist Makers' Strike, primary-source photos of immigrant life, and an audio interview with Pauline Newman, who details work conditions in the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory prior to the infamous fire of 1911. Also useful is a "Timeline" of the

period, as well as links to websites about immigration that are rich in historical background and primary-source documentation.

#### Ellis Island

<http://www.ellisland.org/>

This site is useful for both teachers and students; it includes an immigration timeline, a short history of Ellis Island, and galleries of historical and contemporary photos of this immigration station.

#### Immigration...The Changing Face of America

[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/immig/immigration\\_set1.html](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/immig/immigration_set1.html)

This Library of Congress website has historical and cultural information on a variety of immigrant groups who came to the United States during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In particular, the site is useful for its archival photographs, timelines and maps for each immigrant group, as well as a number of fun, immigration-related quizzes.

#### The Lower East Side Tenement Museum

<http://www.tenement.org/>

This website for the Lower East Side's Tenement Museum will help students get into the spirit of this lesson as they have fun learning about immigrant life in turn-of-the-century New York. At one part of the site, students can create their own folk songs from authentic sounds of the Lower East Side (<http://www.tenement.org/folksongs/>). Elsewhere on the site, the students can browse in the Tenement Encyclopedia, which has straightforward entries about immigrant life in New York, including topics such as health, settlement houses, sweatshops, and movies (<http://www.tenement.org/encyclopedia/>).

#### History of the Jews in Russia

<http://www.friends-partners.org/partners/beyond-the-pale/english/28.html>

This excellent website features a historical narrative, accompanied by primary-source photos, detailing both the history of Jews in Russia during the nineteenth century and their reasons for emigrating. The easily readable text is accompanied by archival photos of Jewish life in the Pale of Settlement (the area to which Jews in Russia were confined).

### **NOTES ON THE PDF:**

- 1) Please note that in this pdf document the page numbers are two off from the printed curriculum. For example, page 2 in the printed curriculum is now page 4 in this pdf document.
- 2) We apologize if some of the hyperlinks are no longer accurate. They were correct at the time of printing.
- 3) Full-page versions of the images in this unit—some in color—can be found at the back of this pdf.
- 4) You can easily navigate through the different parts of this document by using the “Bookmark” tab on the left side of your Acrobat window.

# Gold on the Sidewalk: An Immigrant Story

## INTRODUCTION: COMING TO AMERICA

*Essential Question:  
Why did immigrants come to America and  
what did they hope to find here?*

### **What does it mean to be an “immigrant?”**

Of course, you probably already know that an immigrant is a person who moves, or migrates, from one nation or region to another. But think for a moment about how hard this might be for someone to do. Immigrants not only have to leave their homes, but they may also be separated, sometimes forever, from family, friends, and the culture (way of life) that they have grown up with.

What might convince someone to leave his or her old life behind for an unknown future in a strange and foreign place?



**IMAGE 1:** “New York! Welcome to the land of freedom”

How many possible reasons can you think of that might convince someone to become an immigrant?

Consider what historians call “push” factors and “pull” factors for immigrants. That is, sometimes

immigrants are forced to leave, or are pushed from, their home countries; other times, immigrants are attracted, or pulled, to a new country. Brainstorm (list) some of these factors in the columns on the next page.

## **Immigration**

“PUSH” FACTORS:

“PULL” FACTORS:

Around 1900, the United States experienced a massive wave of immigrant newcomers, the biggest in its history until that time. Millions of people from around the world came to America, especially from Eastern, Southern, and Western Europe. Different immigrant groups tended to

settle in different areas: Latin Americans generally migrated to the Southwest; Scandinavians often came to the Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Region; and Europeans mostly settled in big cities like Chicago and New York. Between 1880 and 1930, over twenty-seven

## **Timeline**

**1815:** The first great wave of immigration begins, bringing 5 million immigrants to the U.S. between 1815 and 1860.

**1840s and 1850s:** There is a surge in Irish immigration to the United States as a result of the potato famine and British colonial oppression.

**1862:** The Homestead Act encourages naturalization by granting citizens title to 160 acres of land in the West. During the same decade, growing numbers of Chinese immigrants arrive to help build the western half of the transcontinental railroad. They soon face growing nativist antagonism and violence.

**1882:** The Chinese Exclusion Act is established. Russian anti-Semitism prompts the beginning of a sharp rise in Jewish emigration.

**1900-1910:** The decade of the highest rate of immigration to the United States, per capita, in history.

**1910:** The Mexican Revolution sends thousands to the United States seeking employment and shelter from conflict in their homeland.

**1914-1918:** World War I temporarily halts mass migration to the United States while whipping up anti-alien fervor domestically.

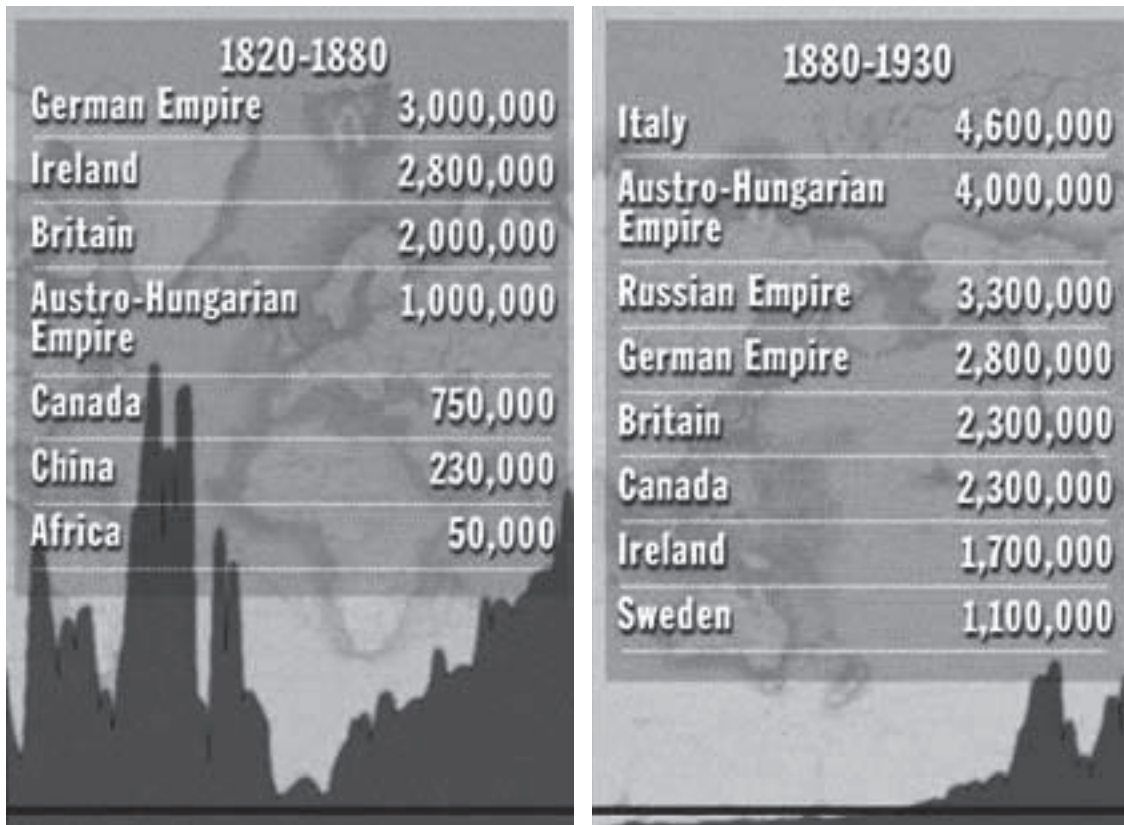
**1924:** The National Origins Act establishes a discriminatory quota system. Immigration from Eastern, Central, and Southern Europe is drastically curtailed.

million people immigrated to the United States! This lesson focuses on the East-

ern European immigrants who left their homes in the “Old World” to start new

lives in the “New World” of America during this period.

*Look at the timeline images below and answer the questions.*



**IMAGE 2:** Immigrants arriving at Ellis Island, 1820-1880 (left) and 1880-1930 (right)

1. Approximately how many immigrants came to the United States through Ellis Island between 1820 and 1880?
2. How many came through Ellis Island between 1880 and 1930?
3. Which group experienced the greatest increase in immigrants between these two time periods?

## THE STORY OF AN IMMIGRANT GIRL

This lesson will introduce you to a young Jewish immigrant named Pauline Newman, who came from Lithuania, a small nation of people in Eastern Europe. Pauline came to the United States in the year 1901. Her story will help us to understand some of the reasons people immigrated to the

United States, some of the hardships they experienced on their journeys, and how different America looked compared to the world they left behind.

We will begin with two different, but related, documents that will help us to better understand the immigrant experience

of a century ago.

The first was written by a historian of this era and appeared in the textbook *Pathways to the Present*. The second document is from Pauline Newman's account of her immigration experience.

### Document #1

*It was sometimes said that America's streets were paved with gold. This myth held a grain of truth for the millions of immigrants who left a life of utter poverty behind. They came to America because it offered, if not instant wealth, then at least the chance to improve their lives. Some immigrants did get rich here, through hard work and determination. Many more managed to carve out a decent life for themselves and their families. For these immigrants, the chance to come to the United States was indeed a golden opportunity (211).*

### Document #2:

#### Paragraph 1:

*The village I came from was very small. One store, one **synagogue**, and one church. There was a little square where the **peasants** would bring their produce, you know, for sale. And there was one teahouse where you could have a glass of tea for a penny and sit all day long and play checkers if you wanted. In the winter we would skate down the hilltop toward the lake, and in the summer we'd walk to the woods and get mushrooms, raspberries. The peasants lived on one side of the lake, and the Jewish people on the other, in little square, thatched-roofed houses. In order to go to school you had to own land and we didn't own land, of course. Very few Jews did. But we were allowed to go to Sunday School and I never missed going to Sunday School. They would sing Russian folk songs and recite poetry. I liked it very much. It was a narrow life, but you didn't miss anything because you didn't know what you were missing.*

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## Glossary

**synagogue:** the house of worship and communal center of a Jewish congregation.

**peasant:** a member of a European class of persons who tills the soil as a small landowner or laborer; usually, an uneducated person of low social status.

Paragraph 2:

That was the time, you see, when America was known to foreigners as the land where you'd get rich. 'There's gold on the sidewalk—all you have to do is pick it up.' So people left that little village and went to America. My brother first and then he sent for one sister, and after that, a few years after that, my father died and they sent for my mother and my other two sisters and me. I was seven or eight at the time. I'm not sure exactly how old, because the village I came from had no registration of birth, and we lost the family Bible on the ship and that was where the records were.

Paragraph 3:

Of course we came **steerage**. That's the bottom of the ship and three layers of bunks. One, two, three, one above the other. If you were lucky, you got the first bunk. Of course you can understand that it wasn't all that pleasant when the people on the second bunk or the third bunk were ill. You had to suffer and endure not only your own misery, but the misery from the people above you. My mother baked rolls and things like that for us to take along, because all you got on the boat was water, boiled water. If you had tea, you could make tea, but otherwise you just had the hot water. Sometimes they gave you a watery soup, more like a mud puddle than soup. It was stormy, cold, uncomfortable. I wasn't sick, but the other members of my family were.



IMAGE 3: Steerage passengers on deck

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## Glossary

**steerage:** a section of inferior accommodations on a passenger ship for those paying the lowest fares.



**IMAGE 4:** Two children with their baggage at Ellis Island

*Paragraph 4:*

*When we landed at Ellis Island [outside New York City] our luggage was lost. We inquired for it and they said, 'Come another time. Come another time. You'll find it. We haven't got time now.' So we left and we never saw our luggage again. We had bedding, linen, beautiful copper utensils, that sort of thing. From Ellis Island we went by wagon to my brother's apartment on Hester Street. Hester Street and Essex on the Lower East Side [of New York City]. We were all bewildered to see so many people. Remember we were from a little village. And here you had people coming and going and shouting. Peddlers, people on the streets. Everything was new, you know.*



**IMAGE 5, left:** Jewish family making garters in tenement home

**IMAGE 6, below:** The courtyard of a tenement building in New York City

*Paragraph 5:*

*At first we stayed in a tiny apartment with my brother and then, finally, we got one of our own. Two rooms. The bedroom had no windows. The toilets were in the yard. Just a coal stove for heat. The rent was ten dollars a month. A cousin of mine worked for the Triangle Shirtwaist Company and she got me on there in October of 1901.*



*Before we analyze the experiences of immigrants like Pauline, let's think about the kinds of materials—**primary sources** and **secondary sources**—that we are using in this lesson.*

1. Briefly review with your teacher the difference between a primary and a secondary source. What sets them apart, or makes them different? How are they related, or similar? Summarize the difference in the space below.

*Now look back at the two sources you have just read.*

2. What kind of source (primary or secondary) is Document #1? How can you tell? Which words, phrases, and/or point of view (perspective) help you to classify the passage as primary or secondary?
3. What is the message, or thesis, of Document #1?
4. What kind of source (primary or secondary) is Document #2? How can you tell? Which words, phrases, and/or point of view (perspective) help you to classify the passage as primary or secondary?
5. What is the thesis of Document #2?
6. How are Documents #1 and #2 related to each other?





**IMAGE 7:** World Map

It is important to know that Russia, the powerful and much larger country next to Lithuania, controlled Lithuania when Pauline was a child. The Russians did not treat everyone in Lithuania equally and they enforced **discriminatory** laws against some people, especially religious minorities like the Jews. They also forced many Lithuanian boys to join the Russian army—something that many Lithuanians deeply resented. This was especially difficult for Jews, because

joining the army made it impossible for Jewish sol-

diers to observe their religious practices.



**IMAGE 8:** Shtetl Skaudvile

7. How and why might the conditions described above have affected Lithuanian immigration to the United States?

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## Glossary

**discriminatory:** marked by or showing prejudice; biased.

## Life in the “Old World”

1. According to Pauline (from Paragraph 1 of her story on page 9), what was life like in her village?
2. What might she have meant when she said, “It was a narrow life, but you didn’t miss anything because you didn’t know what you were missing”?
3. “Brainstorm” a list of at least six adjectives that you could use to describe life in Pauline’s village. Use them to fill in the vocabulary boxes below.


4. Now, choose at least three of the adjectives from the boxes above and use them to write a sentence describing of the kind of world in which Pauline lived before she came to America.
5. How does your description of Pauline’s Lithuanian village compare with the photo of an early twentieth-century shtetl (a Jewish village in Eastern Europe) in Image 8, above? Could the three adjectives that you used to describe Pauline’s village also apply to the village depicted above? Why or why not? If not, what adjectives would you use to describe the shtetl in the photo?
6. In Paragraph 2 of her story (on page 10), Pauline writes that people in Lithuania said there was “gold on the sidewalk” in America. Do you think they meant this literally? If not, what do you think they really meant when they said there was “gold on the sidewalk”?
7. What might this tell us about the way Eastern Europeans (among others) thought about America at this time?
8. How do you think they developed this impression of the United States?

## The Passage to America

1. How does Pauline describe her trip to America in Paragraph 3 on page 10? Why do you think that she, like most immigrants, traveled in the steerage section of the ship?



**IMAGE 9:** “Immigrants on an Atlantic liner”

2. Study the picture above, of immigrants sailing from Europe to America. Now, imagine that you are in the crowd. Brainstorm a list of at least six adjectives that you could use to describe how you might be feeling at this moment, both physically and emotionally. Use these adjectives to fill in the vocabulary boxes below.


3. Pick out at least three of the adjectives from the boxes above and use them to write a one-sentence, first-person description of the scene in Image 9.

## The Debate about Immigrants like Pauline

It is important to recognize that although many Americans welcomed immigrants to the United States, many did not. Not everyone was happy that millions of immigrants from Eastern, Central, and Southern Europe (people like Pauline) were coming to America. The newcomers' culture—their languages, religions, appearance, and traditions—seemed so different and strange that they frightened some Americans.

Americans had been arguing for a long time about immigration, but in the middle of the 1800s the de-

bate really heated up. During the 1840s and 1850s, Catholics from Ireland began arriving in large numbers (fleeing starvation in their homeland), and in the 1860s and 1870s millions of Chinese men also began arriving, mostly to help build the transcontinental railroad. When Pauline arrived in 1901, Americans were still debating whether or not immigration was a good thing.

It is important to understand that at this time, many Americans believed that certain races of people were better than others.

Some writers argued that people with light skin, or Caucasians, were the most advanced kind of human beings. These writers believed in racial **hierarchy**; that is, they ranked people based on the color of their skin and other physical attributes, saying that people with darker skins could never be as good, or “civilized,” as white people. One hundred years ago, Eastern, Southern, and Central Europeans were generally not considered “white” and were not thought of as the highest, or best, kind of Caucasians.

*Study the four primary sources (beginning on page 20) which depict Americans' responses to the waves of global immigration during nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Then answer the questions that follow.*

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## Glossary

**hierarchy:** the categorization of a group of people according to ability or status.

**Nordic:** here, it means white and European. Usually, Nordic refers to people from Scandinavia.

**asylum:** an institution for the care of people, especially those with physical or mental impairments, who require organized supervision or assistance.

**stratum:** level of society; a stratum is usually composed of people with a similar social, cultural, or economic status.

**wretched:** miserable; in a state of distress or misfortune.

**submerged:** living in poverty or misery.

**ghetto:** a section of a city occupied by a minority group that usually lives there because of social, economic, or legal pressure.

**almshouse:** a home for the poor that is maintained by private charity.

**flotsam:** here, it means poor or homeless people. Usually, it means trash floating on the water.

**vulgar:** crudely indecent.

**compulsory:** required; obligatory.

**undistinguishable:** not capable of being distinguished or differentiated; indistinguishable.

The first comment you will read is from Madison Grant's book, *The Passing of the Great Race*, written in 1916. (The glossary of terms is on page 19.)

### **Primary source #1**

*[The] new immigrants [from South, Central, and Eastern Europe] are no longer exclusively members of the **Nordic** race as were the earlier ones who came of their own impulse to improve their social conditions. The transportation lines advertised America as a land flowing with milk and honey and the European governments took the opportunity to unload upon careless, wealthy and hospitable America the sweepings of their jails and **asylums**. The result is that the new immigration contains a large and increasing number of the weak, the broken and the mentally crippled of all races drawn from the lowest **stratum** of the Mediterranean basin [Southern Europe] and the Balkans [Central Europe], together with hordes of the **wretched, submerged** populations of the Polish **Ghetto** [Eastern Europe]. Our jails, insane asylums and **almshouses** are filled with human **flotsam** and the whole tone of American life, social, moral and political, has been lowered and **vulgarized** by them.*

1. Does Madison Grant favor or oppose immigration from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe? How can you tell?
2. What reasons does Grant give in support or in opposition to immigration from this part of the world to America?

The second comment you will read is from A. Piatt Andrew's essay, "The Crux of the Immigration Question," from the *North American Review* (June 1914).

### **Primary source #2**

In a very few years, with our free and **compulsory** schools, our free libraries, and the economic opportunities which this country has to offer, these people [immigrants who arrived earlier, in the mid-1800s] were transformed into ambitious, self-respecting, public-spirited citizens. And so it is with the Italians and Poles, the Russian Jews, and other poor immigrants of more recent times. They are often very poor in this world's goods when they enter our gates. But it is miraculous how quickly we are able to transform, enrich, and absorb them. A few years later one sees the children of these same immigrants well dressed and ambitious, well educated, and literally **undistinguishable** in manners, morals, or appearance from the descendants of those who came over in the *Mayflower*. Such is the power of the great American melting pot.

1. Does A. Piatt Andrew favor or oppose immigration from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe?
2. What reasons does Andrew give in support or in opposition to immigration from this part of the world to America?

Now look at the following cartoon, drawn by Frederick Burr Opper and Joseph Keppler, which appeared in an 1881 edition of the humor and satire magazine, Puck.

**Primary source #3**



**IMAGE 10:** "The Modern Moses"

1. Examine the image above carefully and describe what you see. What is happening in the picture?
2. What is the subject (topic) of this cartoon?
3. How do the authors portray this subject? What is their perspective? How can you tell? Refer to specific aspects of the cartoon to explain your answer, such as the text in the cartoon, the image of death in a helmet looming on the horizon, or the portrayal of the immigrants.
4. Why do you think the authors have portrayed the subject of this cartoon in this way?
5. How might the authors have been trying to influence how you, the reader, feel about the subject of the cartoon?
6. Do you think that the people who created this political cartoon more closely agree with Madison Grant's views on immigration (Primary source #1) or those of A. Piatt Andrew (Primary source #2)? Explain why you think so.

Now, compare the cartoon on page 21 (Image 10) with the one below, which was drawn by Joseph Keppler and published in Puck in 1880.

### Primary Source #4



**IMAGE 11:** “Welcome to All!”

1. Describe what is happening in this cartoon.
2. What is the cartoon’s subject?
3. What is the author’s perspective? How do you know? Refer to as many details from the cartoon as possible when explaining your answer, such as the text in the image, the portrayal of the immigrants, and the figure in the sky.
4. Why do you think the author has portrayed the subject of this cartoon in this way?
5. How might the author have been trying to influence how you, the reader, feel about the subject of the cartoon?
6. How does this cartoon compare with “The Modern Moses” (Image 10)? They are both about a similar topic, but how do their perspectives on the topic differ? How can you tell? (One way to get started with this question is to compare the Uncle Sam figures and the immigrants in each cartoon).

## A “New World” on Hester Street



**IMAGE 12:** “Hester Street, New York City, 1903”

While Americans continued to debate whether or not immigration should continue, the immigrants themselves, like Pauline Newman, often faced a challenging situation when they arrived in America. The jobs they found were often very

hard and many people were forced to live closely together, sharing small houses or apartments so they could afford the rent. Some immigrants decided to return to their home countries or emigrate to other countries instead of remaining

in America. Those migrants who left America are referred to as **emigrants**.

Unlike the many emigrants who left America after a period of time, Pauline Newman was one of the millions who remained in the United States.

Reread Paragraphs 1 and 4 from Pauline’s autobiography. Then compare the photo in Image 12, of Pauline’s new neighborhood, Hester Street (in New York City), with the picture of the Lithuanian **shtetl** on page 16.

1. Use the chart below to describe how the two photos are similar and how they are different.

<b>Similarities between</b> Hester Street and the Lithuanian Village	<b>Differences between</b> Hester Street and the Lithuanian Village

2. How might the differences between Pauline’s old home in Lithuania and her new home in New York City help us to understand why Pauline was “bewildered” by her Hester Street neighborhood?

.....

## Glossary

**shtetl:** a Jewish village in Eastern Europe.

## “Gold on the Sidewalk”

Before Pauline left Lithuania, she had heard people say that in America there was “gold on the sidewalk—all you have to do is pick

it up.” Reread Paragraph 5 of Pauline’s story and then consider how this vision of America (“gold on the sidewalk”) compares with what

Pauline and her family actually found when they first arrived. How would you compare the vision with the reality?

*Complete the chart below, using the left-hand side to describe what Pauline expected America to be like and the right-hand side to describe what she actually found.*

<b><i>Pauline’s vision of America</i></b>	<b><i>The reality of America</i></b> for Pauline when she first arrived

*Now use both of the descriptions you wrote above to help you compose a one-sentence reply to this question:*

- How closely did Pauline’s expectations of America match her first impressions of it when she arrived in New York City in 1901?

## Assessment

Pretend you are working on a movie about Pauline Newman and her journey to America, called *Gold on the Sidewalk*. Before you begin filming the movie, you will need to figure out how you are going to tell Pauline's story. Moviemakers often use "story-boards" to help them visualize the story they are going to tell. Story-

boards are hand-drawn illustrations that the director of the movie needs to help him or her imagine what each scene in the movie will look like before he or she actually begins filming. Your job is to create a five-scene "story-board" of Pauline's journey from Lithuania to her new home in America. You will need to choose the five most

important "scenes" in her immigration story and then figure out what they will look like. Draw each scene in your storyboard as carefully as you can and then label each of the storyboards with a quotation (from Pauline's primary-source description) that best conveys what is happening in the scene.

## LIST OF IMAGES

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# Gold on the Sidewalk: An Immigrant Story



**COVER IMAGE/IMAGE 1:** “New York - Welcome to the land of freedom - An ocean steamer passing the Statue of Liberty: Scene on the steerage deck” (*Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*). 2 July 1887. Reproduced from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-USZ62-113735. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3c13735>.

1820-1850	1880-1890
German Empire 3,000,000	Italy 4,600,000
Ireland 2,800,000	Austro-Hungarian Empire 4,000,000
Britain 2,000,000	Russian Empire 3,300,000
Austro-Hungarian Empire 1,000,000	German Empire 2,800,000
Canada 750,000	Britain 2,300,000
China 230,000	Canada 2,300,000
Africa 50,000	Ireland 1,700,000
	Sweden 1,100,000

**IMAGE 2:** “The Peopling of America” timeline. Reproduced from the *Ellis Island* website [http://www.ellisland.org/immexp/wseix\\_4\\_3.asp](http://www.ellisland.org/immexp/wseix_4_3.asp).



**IMAGE 3:** “People in steerage on deck of ocean liner” (George Grantham Bain Collection). N.date. Reproduced from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-DIG-ggbain-04546. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ggbain.04546>.



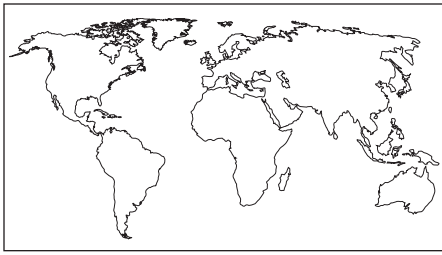
**IMAGE 4:** “Ellis Island” (George Grantham Bain Collection). N.date. Reproduced from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-DIG-ggbain-22287. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ggbain.22287>.



**IMAGE 5:** “Jewish family working on garters in kitchen for tenement home” (Lewis Hine). November 1912. From the records of the National Child Labor Committee. Reproduced from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-USZ62-38231. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/nclc.04274>.



**IMAGE 6:** “Rear view of tenement, 134 1/2 Thompson Street, New York City” (Lewis Hine). February 1912. From the records of the National Child Labor Committee. Reproduced from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-USZ62-93116. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/nclc.04148>.



**IMAGE 7:** Susan Reese, World Map.



**IMAGE 8:** “Shtetl Skaudvile” (postcard collection of Tomasz Wisniewski of Bialystok). Reproduced from *Avotaynu* ([www.avotaynu.com](http://www.avotaynu.com)).



**IMAGE 9:** Edwin Levick, “Immigrants on an Atlantic Liner [S.S. Patricia].” 10 December 1906. Reproduced from the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-USZ62-11202. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3a13598>.



**IMAGE 10:** Frederick Burr Opper and Joseph Keppler, “The Modern Moses” (*Puck*). December 1881. Reproduced from Mary Campbell, *The Pen, Not the Sword* (Nashville: Aurora Publishers, 1970), p. 99.



**IMAGE 11:** J. Keppler, “Welcome to All” (*Puck*). 28 April 1880. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Reproduction number LC-USZC4-954. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/>



**IMAGE 12:** “Hester Street, New York City.” 1903. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, Records of the Public Housing Administration (196-GS-369).

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Book design by Susan Reese

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*“These dynamic lessons allow students to sharpen their analytical skills as they explore important episodes and problems in American history. Correlated with the California State Content Standards for eleventh grade, each lesson brings American history to life with engaging images, well-chosen text, provocative questions, and helpful step-by-step guidance through empirical evidence. Together, these innovative lessons actively engage students in an exploration of twentieth-century American cultural, social, and political history.”*

—Alice Fahs, Associate Professor of History,  
The University of California, Irvine

## CALIFORNIA HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCE STANDARDS ADDRESSED

### Content Standard

#### 11.2

Students analyze the relationship among the rise of industrialization, large-scale rural-to-urban migration, and massive immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe.

### Skills

- Students identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations.
- Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.
- Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.

